

Proposed Establishment of Certification Programs for Health Information Technology



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Newsletter

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ONC for HIT publishes NPRM for Establishment of Certification Programs

On March 10, 2010, the Office of the National Coordinator (ONC) for Health Information Technology (HIT), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) published a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) entitled “Proposed Establishment of Certification Programs for Health Information Technology.” This rule proposes the creation of two programs to test and certify HIT.

The first proposal would establish a temporary certification program whereby the National Coordinator would authorize organizations to test and certify Complete Electronic Health Records (EHRs) and/or EHR Modules. This program would assure the availability of Certified EHR Technology prior to the date on which health care providers seeking the incentive payments under the proposed Medicare and Medicaid EHR Incentives Program must begin demonstrating meaningful use of EHRs.

The second proposal would establish a permanent certification program to replace the temporary program. The proposed permanent certification program would separate the responsibilities for performing testing and certification, introduce accreditation requirements, and establish requirements for certification bodies authorized by the National Coordinator related to the surveillance of Certified EHR Technology. It would also include the potential for certification bodies authorized by the National Coordinator to certify other types of HIT besides Complete EHRs and EHR Modules.

While two certification programs are described in this proposed rule, ONC anticipates issuing separate final rules for each of the programs. The Final Rule for establishing the temporary program is expected in July 2010 while the permanent program is expected to be finalized by October 2010.

The MHS submitted comments on this NPRM and two previous regulations: the NPRM entitled “Medicare and Medicaid Programs; EHR Incentive Program;” and an Interim Final Rule (IFR) entitled “HIT: Initial Set of Standards, Implementation Specifications, and Certification Criteria for EHR Technology.” These rules are expected to be finalized during the summer of 2010.

The latest NPRM can be accessed via <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2010/pdf/2010-4991.pdf>

